

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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P R 210714Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8789

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RO, XF, IS

SUBJECT: PUBLISHED ROMANIAN VERSION OF MAALOT TRAGEDY

1. SUMMARY. AFTER INITIAL SILENCE ON SUBJECT, ROMANIANS FINALLY COMMENTED OFFICIALLY ON MAALOT INCIDENT THROUGH MAY 19 AGERPRES ANNOUNCEMENT IN SCINTEIA (ASSUME TEXT AVAILABLE TO ADDRESSEES). ROMANIAN CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO TRADGEDY PLAYS UP GOR ROLE IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE SITUATION WITHOUT LOSS OF LIFE WHILE IGNORING ANY DIFFICULTIES THE ISRAELIS MAY HAVE HAD IN TRYING TO RELEASE PRISONERS BY PALESTINIAN-SET DEADLINE. WHILE EXPRESSING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"SOLIDARITY WITH THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,"

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCLUDES WITH CONDEMNATION OF PALESTINIANS' INDIVIDUAL TERRORIST ACTIONS" AND USE OF CHILDREN AS HOSTAGES AND ALSO SCORES SUBSEQUENT ISRAELI RETALIATION AGAINST LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

2. LENGTHY AGERPRES ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAY 19 GIVES OFFICIAL GOR VERSION OF MAALOT EVENTS, EMPHASIZING "GOOD OFFICES" ROLE OF ROMANIAN AMBASSADORS IN BEIRUT AND TEL AVIV IN EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE SOLUTION (FRENCH AMBASSADOR IS SCARCELY MENTIONED). STATEMENT ASSERTS THAT ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS AGREED THAT 23 PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED AND FLOWN TO NICOSIA, AFTER WHICH 50 OF CHILDREN HOSTAGES WOULD BE FREED. REMAINDER OF HOSTAGES WERE TO BE RELEASED ONCE THE THREE FEDAYEEN FROM MAALOT HAD PLANE FOR THEIR ESCAPE. ROMANIANS AGREED, AT PALESTINIAN INSISTENCE, TO HAVE TWO OF THEIR EMBASSY EMPLOYEES ACCOMPANY 23 RELEASED PRISONERS TO CYPRUS.

3. WITHOUT GIVING ANY FURTHER EXPLANATION, AGERPRES STATEMENT THEN RELATES ISRAELI MILITARY ASSAULT ON MAALOT AND RESULTING LOSS OF LIFE OF "NUMBER OF INNOCENT CHILDREN" AND THREE ARAB "COMMANDOS". THANKS EXPRESSED TO ROMANIANS BY ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS FOR "GOOD OFFICES" ROLE ARE ALSO MENTIONED. STATEMENT CONCLUDES WITH STANDARD ROMANIAN LANGUAGE ON NEED FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF ME PROBLEM INCLUDING REITERATION OF GOR SUPPORT FOR JUST ASPIRATIONS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. STATEMENT'S CONDEMNATION OF FEDAYEEN INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM AND USE OF CHILDREN AS HOSTAGES, IS BALANCED BY REBUKE OF SUBSEQUENT ISRAELI RETALIATION AGAINST LEBANON.

4. COMMENT. AGERPRESS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE VIEWED AS SOMETHING OF WHITE PAPER ON ROMANIAN ROLE IN MAALOT TRAGEDY. WHILE STATEMENT CONTAINS NO OVERT CRITICISMS OF EITHER SIDE BEYOND THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE, THERE IS STRONG IMPLICATION THAT ISRAELIS UNNECESSARILY CHOSE TO FOLLOW MILITARY ROUTE, WITH RESULTING LOSS OF LIFE, WHEN MODALITIES FOR NON-VIOLENT RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM HAD ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED. THIS ACCORDS WITH PERCEPTIBLE ROMANIAN TOLT TOWARDS ARABS IN RECENT MONTHS WITHIN GENERAL POLICY FRAMEWORK OF MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SIDES. ABOVE ALL, STATEMENT SERVES TO JUSTIFY GOR POLICY TOWARD AREA INCLUDING PRETENSIONS TOWARD PLAYING SOME KIND OF "GOOD OFFICES" ROLE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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